

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE PRIORITY

INFO USCINCSO

GOV PAN CANAL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS, PQ, PN, HA

SUBJECT: REPATRIATION OF HAITIAN NATIONALS

1. AS NONE OF THE 36 HAITIANS HAVE APPARENTLY REQUESTED ASYLUM, DEPARTMENT VIEWS THEIR RETURN TO HAITI CAN BE HANDLED AS NORMAL REPATRIATION. CZ AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE ALERT FOR POSSIBLE CLAIMS TO ASYLUM WHICH WOULD REQUIRE SUBMISSION OF INFORMATION UNDER USUAL ASYLUM PROCEDURES.

2. ALTHOUGH WE PREFER USE OF TOCUMEN AIRPORT DEPARTMENT BELIEVES COPA'S USE OF HOWARD AIR FORCE BASE FOR THIS PURPOSE IS BOTH CONSISTENT WITH ALL RELEVANT UNITED STATES-PANAMANIAN TREATIES AND LEGALLY PERMISSIBLE. PANAMA HAS MAINTAINED A CONTRARY INTERPRETATION AND OFTEN HAS LODGED FORMAL PROTESTS OVER USE OF CANAL ZONE AIRFIELDS BY CIVIL-
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IAN AIRCRAFT. WE HAVE NEVER ACCEPTED THEIR POSITION. HOW-

EVER, WE ASSUME THAT GOP WOULD NOT PROTEST GIVEN THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THIS CASE AND THE FACT THAT A COPA PLANE IS INVOLVED. THEREFORE UNLESS EMBASSY PERCEIVES ANY SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES WITH THE GOP, DEPARTMENT HAS NO OBJECTION TO USE OF HOWARD AFB.

3. FOR PORT AU PRINCE: WE WOULD APPRECIATE FOLLOWUP ON HANDLING OF THESE PEOPLE BY HAITIAN AUTHORITIES WHEN THEY RETURN TO HAITI. KISSINGER

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